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Common Ground

"If the sheeple should have learned anything throughout this most recent fleecing – and we aren't even halfway through this romp in the pasture – it's that a little scepticism and a refusal to follow the herd is a healthy thing."

more inside »

Forgiveness
How the mind works
Universal intelligence



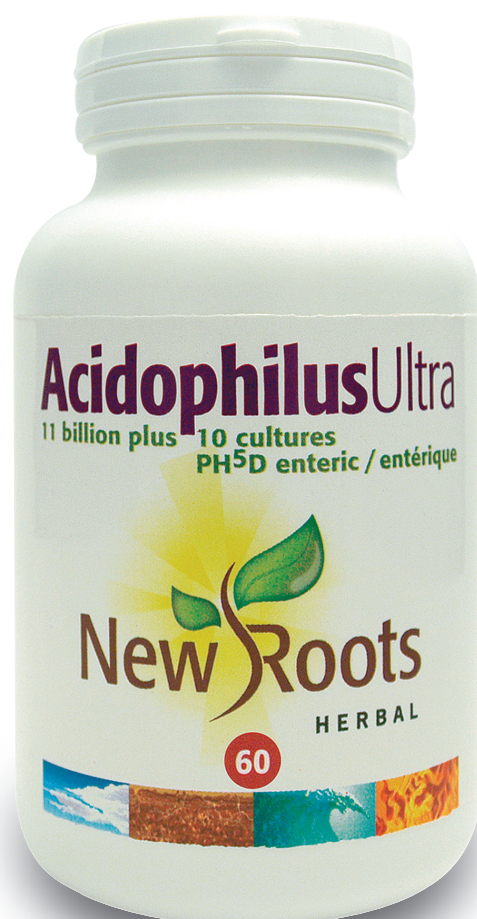
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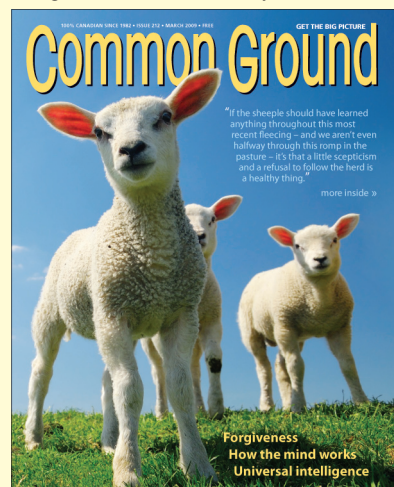
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The impossible will take a little while

INSPIRATION

WRITING ON THE WALL Paul Rogat Loeb

Whether we flourish or perish depends on how well we can honor the interdependence that Martin Luther King evoked: "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

A few years ago, I heard Archbishop Desmond Tutu speak at a Los Angeles benefit for a South African project. He'd been fighting prostate cancer, was tired that evening and had taken a nap before his talk. But when Tutu addressed the audience he became animated, expressing amazement that his long-oppressed country had provided the world with an unforgettable lesson in reconciliation and hope. Afterwards, a few other people spoke, then a band from East L.A. took the stage and launched into an irresistibly rhythmic tune. People started dancing. Suddenly I noticed Tutu, boogying away in the middle of the crowd. I'd never seen a Nobel Peace Prize winner, still less one with a potentially fatal illness, move with such joy and abandonment. Tutu, I realized, knows how to have a good time. Indeed, it dawned on me that his ability to recognize and embrace life's pleasures helps him face its cruelties and disappointments, be they personal or political.

Few of us will match Tutu's achievements, but we'd do well to learn from someone who spent years challenging

apartheid's brutal system of human degradation, yet has remained light hearted and free of bitterness. Any clear-eyed view of the world recognizes that grave threats exist: war, environmental destruction, the runaway power of corporate greed. To make matters worse, those in power often take advantage of real threats, like terrorism, by exploiting fear and feelings of vulnerability for their own again. The antidote to such fear... is hope: defiant, resilient, persistent hope, of the kind that Tutu embodies. In this vision, we act no matter what the seeming odds, both to be true to ourselves and to open up new possibilities.

Even in a seemingly losing cause, one person may unknowingly inspire another, and that person yet a third who could go on to change the world, or at least a small corner of it. Rosa Parks' husband Raymond convinced her to attend her first NAACP meeting, the initial step on a 12-year path that brought her to that fateful day on the bus in Montgomery. But who got Raymond Parks involved? And why did that person take the trouble *continued p.22...*

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Forgive for Good: 9 Steps to Forgiveness March 26, 2009



Dr. Fred Luskin has a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Stanford University and is the Director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Projects. The forgiveness projects have successfully explored forgiveness therapy with people who suffered from all sorts of

wounds: from the violence in Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, as well as the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11 to betrayals in relationships and business. He currently serves as a Senior Consultant in Health Promotion at Stanford University and is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. He is the author of the best selling books "Forgive for Love" and "Forgive for Good".

Featuring: Dr. Fred Luskin, Director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Projects, renowned researcher, author and expert in forgiveness.

The practice of forgiveness has been shown to reduce anger, hurt, depression and stress and leads to greater feelings of hope, peace, compassion and self-confidence. Practicing forgiveness leads to healthy relationships as well as improved physical health.

The format for this event is a combination of lecture and interactive small group exercises where you will have the opportunity to practice what you learn. You will explore: forgiveness with the goal of reducing hurt and helplessness, letting go of anger, and increasing confidence and hope as you learn how to release unwanted hurts and grudges. Dr. Luskin's presentation will include the HEAL process of forgiveness that, when learned, can lead to enhanced well being through self-care.

Dr. Luskin offers a powerful method emphasizing letting go of hurt, helplessness and anger while increasing confidence, hope, happiness and well being.

You will learn

- the 9 steps to forgiveness as presented by Dr. Luskin
- the mental and physical benefits of practicing forgiveness
- how the HEAL process of forgiveness can lead to enhanced well being
- practical tools you can use right away in your own life

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Back room drug deals

HEALTH

DRUG BUST Alan Cassels

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A questionable lack of transparency in pharmaceutical policy

The very word 'secrecy' is repugnant in a free and open society and we are, as a people, inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings.

— John F. Kennedy.

ARE YOU familiar with the line, “If you’ve nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear?” That’s the slogan often used to attack those who express concern about personal privacy – the ones who say they’re worried about the proliferation of surveillance cameras, databases and other data-collection devices that track us like bloodhounds, recording our every encounter with the legal, commercial, educational and medical systems. Where is all that information kept? How correct is it? Who is using it? Can it be used for purposes for other than which it was intended? Will it ever come back to haunt us even if we have “nothing to hide?” Scary thoughts indeed.

While personal privacy is an issue that gets a lot of attention, leading to a growing level of public concern about exactly how personal data are being used, there’s another side to the secrecy issue. And that’s the fact that many decisions, especially vital decisions that affect healthcare, are made in secret, not open to the sunlight of public scrutiny. Most people would find

it astounding that, in Canada, millions are spent on healthcare decisions made behind closed doors. Even if these decisions are being made by well-meaning policy makers fully preoccupied with advancing the public interest, secretive decision-making, by its very nature, means there is no way for third parties to verify whether or not the public interest is best served.

One example on my radar, although details are sketchy, is the way different provincial drug plans cut deals with drug companies about listing their drugs. These so-called product listing agreements allow companies to get their new drugs on the formulary – the list of drugs the province will pay for – without having to reveal how much or how little they are paying the government. They also don’t have to reveal how much more patients and private insurers may have to pay outside the government plan for the same drug. The public may be getting a real steal on a certain product, which just might be providing incredible value for taxpayer money, but the name of the game is secrecy; no one is supposed to know.

Let’s say a company wants its new drug listed on the Ontario Drug Plan and it asks the Ontario government for a certain price. After negotiations about the number of doses and the number of patients likely to use the drug, the prod-

uct will be listed. If the company sells more of the drug than it projected, it might be required to pay back some of those additional costs to government. These agreements may have research requirements built into them to better monitor how the drug is being used in the general population. This is all conjecture, of course, because the deals are made in secret. What actually happens within a product listing agreement is a big, black box and no one, except the government

maximum value for the dollar.

Let’s broaden this question and ask ourselves if we’d welcome governments secretly negotiating on our behalf for other public goods. Would we allow the building of a new Port Mann Bridge or a new Sea-to-Sky Highway to be negotiated in secret? What would we say if prospective builders got together with government officials and hammered out financial deals where the public couldn’t know how much money is changing hands?

Some say the secrecy is necessary because of the way the drug industry and the different public pharmacare programs are structured in Canada. For instance, Quebec has a “most favoured nation” clause that requires manufacturers to provide the Quebec government with the lowest price among all the provincial plans. Maybe doing deals in secret is the only way any other province can get the fairest price. It’s hard to tell, but a recent paper published by Aidan Hollis, an economist in Alberta, found that BC carried out a sole-sourcing contract with a drug company that involved secret rebates to Pharmacare. The problem he saw was that the alleged price reductions for Pharmacare recipients meant higher prices for everyone else not covered by Pharmacare. Hollis concluded: “A tendering process with secret rebates is not transparent, nor is it fair to impose high costs on those patients whose purchases are not covered by Pharmacare.”

“Transparent.” That’s the word that seems most antithetical to the word “secrecy” and one that pharmaceutical companies absolutely love to fling at governments for being secretive. In fact, if you’ve been listening to the

.....
Am I the only one to notice the faint whiff of hypocrisy when drug companies are cutting secret deals with provincial governments to list their drugs, even as they publicly demand transparency in government-sponsored analyses of new drugs?
.....

negotiators and the manufacturer, knows what kind of money the drug is costing the taxpayer or the consumers who are not covered by provincial plans.

Are these fair agreements? Should they be made in the open? That’s my default opinion, but without knowing the specifics of these deals, it’s necessary to withhold judgement. Hopefully, given all the pressure exerted on governments to keep costs down, such secret deals are actually resulting in

comments from drug lobbyists and their favourite disease groups about public agencies that critically evaluate drugs – Canada’s Common Drug Review and UBC’s Therapeutics Initiative, for example – the word “transparency” is thrown down like a gauntlet. Why aren’t these organizations more “transparent” they ask?

Am I the only one to notice the faint whiff of hypocrisy when drug companies are cutting secret deals with pro-

continued p.12...

**"MANY PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS WORSEN DIABETES,
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University of Calgary document about P-700

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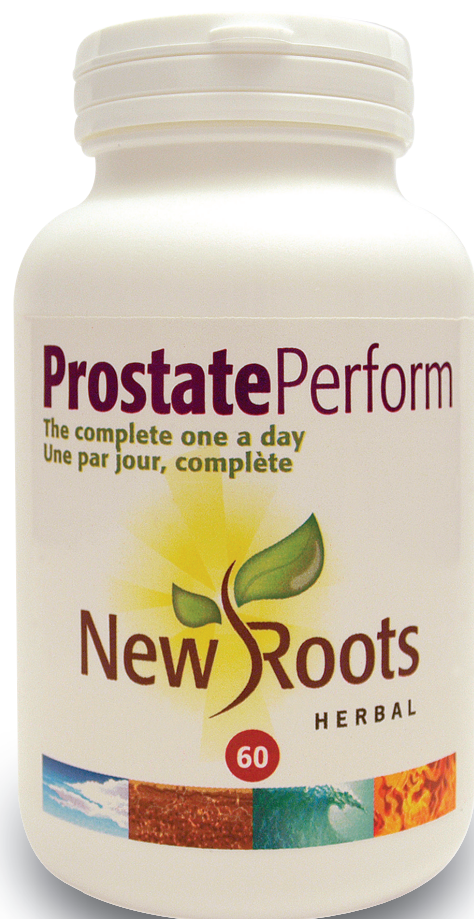
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NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

AT LAST we can celebrate spring and spend more time in BC's beautiful outdoors. Here are some simple and/or collaborative meals to make when you return home. These and similar ideas are from *Raising Vegetarian Children* (J. Stepaniak and V. Melina, McGraw-Hill 2003).

1. Create a spread of make-your-own tacos. Set out taco shells or tortillas, chopped lettuce, onion, tomatoes, sliced or mashed avocado, taco sauce and warmed, canned refried beans or pinto or kidney beans or crumbled veggie burgers. In some families, it works best to include a meat taco filling as well. As noted in Wikipedia, "The fact that a taco can be filled with practically anything that fits on a tortilla allows for its great versatility and variety."

2. Have everyone make their own vegetable pizza (or their section of a bigger one). Start with a purchased whole-grain pizza crust or smaller pita breads. As toppings, set out bowls of pizza sauce, grated carrots, sliced mushrooms, olives and onions (red, yellow or white) and bell peppers (red, yellow or green). If you include veggie pepperoni slices, cover the slices with a little tomato sauce so they don't dry out. You might top the pizza with raw baby spinach after baking and let it wilt slightly before serving.

3. Open a can of vegetarian chili or split pea soup. Add a fresh whole-grain bun and a carrot cut into strips.

4. Serve veggie burgers on whole-grain buns with all the fixings. If you like, serve these with oven-baked sweet potato wedges (instead of French fries).

5. Set out a salad bar. Provide bowls of salad greens, shredded or chopped vegetables, nuts and/or seeds, sprouts, cooked beans or cubes of marinated tofu, leftover cooked vegetables, avocado chunks and a couple of different dressings. Let everyone compose their salad just the way they like it.

6. Make a can of vegetable soup more hearty by adding some canned beans (such as black beans, chickpeas, pinto beans). Serve with whole-grain toast.

7. If kids (or adults) don't eat vegetables at meals, set out a platter of vegetable sticks (carrots, celery, bell peppers) before a meal or as a snack, without saying a word. As an optional dip, many excellent flavours of hummus are now available from supermarket coolers.

Vesanto Melina is a dietitian and co-author of nutrition classics including Becoming Vegetarian, Becoming Vegan, the Food Allergy Survival Guide and the new Raw Food Revolution Diet. www.nutrispeak.com

Colourful kabobs

(Makes eight to nine 10-inch kabobs)

Kabobs are colourful, tasty and fun to make. They are welcome at a barbecue and you can make them any time by browning them under the broiler. Serve them on a bed of rice or in a pita pocket. Choose extra-firm tofu; it has been pressed to remove much of the water and holds its shape well on the 10-inch metal or bamboo skewer. Measurements are approximate.

- 1/2 pound extra-firm tofu, cut in 1/2-inch pieces
- 16 to 18 small mushrooms (1-1/2 ounces or 1 cup of pieces)
- 1/2 red, green or yellow bell pepper, cut in 3/4- to 1-inch pieces
- 1 small zucchini, cut in slices 1/4-inch thick or 3/4-inch cubes
- 1/2 medium red or white onion, cut in 3/4 inch pieces
- 8 to 9 cherry tomatoes

Sweet and tangy marinade

(Makes about 1/2 cup)

- 1/4 cup ketchup

- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. crushed garlic (optional)

In a jar with a tight fitting lid, prepare marinade by stirring together ingredients. Add tofu, put on lid and toss so that pieces are covered. Marinate four to six hours or overnight in the refrigerator, tossing occasionally to coat all pieces. Starting and ending with the mushrooms, alternate pieces of tofu and one or other of the vegetables on the skewer, with a tomato midway along.

Under broiler:

Place kabobs on cookie sheet or roasting pan, baste with marinade and place six inches under broiler for 10 minutes, turning and basting with more marinade once.

On barbecue or grill:

Baste with marinade, turning and basting with more marinade once. Remove when heated through and browned a little.



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Forgive *for* good

A proven prescription for
health and happiness



by Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

I AM A SENIOR consultant for the Vaden Health Center at Stanford University where I teach people ways to manage their stress and to live lives of greater satisfaction. I do this to reduce their risk of disease and to help their bodies and minds remain strong and resilient. A funny thing happened to me in the midst of doing this work. I started to research the effect that forgiveness had on physical and emotional well being. Towards that end, I developed a simple process of teaching people to let go of the grudges and grievances they carried around. As I started to teach forgiveness, I discovered that an unexpectedly large number of people responded to this work with fascination, confusion, enthusiasm and mistrust. Almost no one knew for certain exactly what forgiveness was and why it might be useful to study.

My work as director of the Stanford Forgiveness Projects has shown that learning to forgive helps people hurt less, experience less anger, feel less stress and suffer less depression. My research also shows that, as people learn to forgive, they become more hopeful, optimistic and compassionate. As people learn to forgive, they become more forgiving in general, not just towards one

particular person who did them wrong. Our research has also shown that forgiveness has physical health benefits.

People who learn to forgive report significantly fewer symptoms of stress, such as backache, muscle tension, dizziness, headaches and upset stomachs. In addition, people report improvements in appetite, sleep patterns, energy and general well being. Finally, one research project showed that angry people with high blood pressure showed a decrease in both anger and blood pressure when they learned to forgive.

If forgiveness is so good for us, why do so few of us choose to forgive when people hurt us? First, no one has taught us how to forgive. The religious traditions usually tell us to forgive, but do not offer the practical steps as to how. We live in a culture that prizes the expression of anger and resentment more than the peace of forgiveness. And most people are confused about what forgiveness is and what it is not. Because of this, too many do not take the opportunity to heal themselves, sometimes from great emotional pain and the physical consequences that result.

First, forgiving an offence such as an adulterous affair does not mean you condone the affair. I am reminded often

that we can only forgive that which we know to be wrong. Your partner's affair was wrong, but you do not have to suffer indefinitely because you were betrayed. Secondly, forgiveness in no way means you have to reconcile with someone who treated you badly. If you were the recipient of childhood abuse or are in a harsh relationship, you can forgive the offender and, as part of that choice, make the decision to end or limit contact. Forgiveness is primarily for creating your peace of mind. It is to create healing in your life and return you to a state where you can live capable again of love and trust.

Another misconception about forgiveness is that it depends on whether or not the abuser or lying person apologizes, wants you back or changes his/her ways. If another person's poor behaviour was the determinant for your healing then the unkind and selfish people in your life would retain power over you

3. Understand your goal. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that upset you or condoning their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the "peace and understanding that come from blaming that which has hurt you less, taking the life experience less personally and changing your grievance story."

4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes – or 10 years – ago.

5. At the moment you feel upset, practise the Positive Emotion Refocusing Technique, a simple stress management technique to soothe your body's flight or fight response.

6. Give up expecting things from other people, or your life, that they do not

What I have seen time and time again is that people have the capacity to make peace with their past. They regain their ability to trust and love and stop blaming other people for their emotional distress.

indefinitely. Finally, you can forgive you ex-spouse for their insulting speech and even for abandoning you and your children... but forgiveness in no way means you do not take the ex to court to make sure your children get the support payments to which they are entitled. Forgiveness and justice are not the same. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same. Forgiveness and condoning are not the same.

What I have seen time and time again is that people have the capacity to make peace with their past. They regain their ability to trust and love and stop blaming other people for their emotional distress. They take more time to count their blessings and less to complain about what went wrong. They understand they need to look more at who they are becoming and less at what has happened. They grasp that each day they wake up with a fresh start no matter what happened to them yesterday. They learn to forgive and heal in both body and mind.

Nine steps to forgiveness Forgive for Good

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a couple of trusted people about your experience.

2. Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else. No one else even has to know about your decision.

Dr. Fred Luskin is the director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Projects, a renowned researcher, author and expert in forgiveness. He presents "Forgive for Good: 9 Steps to Forgiveness" at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (Theatre), New Westminster, BC, March 26, 9AM-3:30PM. Call 604-528-5590 or 1-877-528-5591 to register or email register@jibc.ca Visit www.jibc.ca/cs/jd/SpecialEvent.htm



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...Drug Bust - from p.6

vincial governments to list their drugs, even as they publicly demand transparency in government-sponsored analyses of new drugs?

The drug companies' version of the word transparency is simple: these groups want to know who's at the table and they want to know the name, rank and serial number of the key lobbying targets. They want to know which levers to work, hence demanding greater and greater transparency around the decisions governments make about drugs because the more opaque the decision-making process, the less chance the drug companies have of influencing governments' decisions.

Fair enough, right? Yet these demands from the pharmaceutical industry lead to some hard questions regarding the industry's offerings in terms of their own transparency. Sure, they are companies and companies need to keep secrets – proprietary information, ya know – and I can accept that. However, we in the public know almost nothing about what the industry is doing to influence healthcare decisions, such as how much they spend to influence physician prescribing.

Dr. Joel Lexchin, a Canadian expert in pharmaceutical policy and author of one of the best books on the drug industry in Canada – *The Real Pushers*, New Star Books, 1984 – has estimated

that the drug industry in Canada today spends about \$50,000 per doctor, per year, marketing its products to physicians, but we don't know for sure. (With 6,000 practising doctors in BC, that's about \$300 million per year.) Do we know how the money is spent or to what extent it influences prescribing decisions? Of course not. All of that information is confidential, secret and non-transparent.



Alan Cassels is
a drug policy
researcher at
the University of
Victoria and author
of *The ABCs of
Disease Mongering:
An epidemic in 26
Letters*.

Another worrisome aspect of transparency relates to the way Health Canada respects drug manufacturers' requests for confidentiality of unpublished data – that is, the company's clinical data our regulator examines before it allows a drug to be sold in Canada. We researchers who are interested in what those data show – especially in terms of drug safety – can't get them. That information is considered confidential and we can only see summaries of the data that support

the approval of a drug.

Data on drug safety, data on what provinces pay for drugs and data on drug company spending to influence prescribing are certainly on my menu of what I think needs to be brought into the light of day under the banner of greater transparency.

Yet even while governments in Canada jump to satisfy the industry's strident desire for greater transparency, they tend not to demand, in return, greater transparency for those things obviously in the public interest. At the very least, we would hope they would strike a balance so that the glare of transparency can shine on both public and private matters. However, the way the companies and governments currently deal with transparency issues reminds me of the slogan used to describe the recent spate of bailouts of private banks in the economic slowdown: "The privatization of benefits and socialization of costs and risks."

Maybe our democratically elected governments need to say this to the drug companies: "We'll give you transparency of our decision making processes when you provide us equal clarity on your business decisions. You can't have us working in a glass house while you work in a batcave."

Is this unacceptable? I don't think so. After all, if you've got nothing to hide, then you've got nothing to fear.

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Fate of the world's seeds

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

IN THESE uncertain times, with global food security under threat from climate change, do you ever wonder who is in control of the world's food seeds? While it isn't reassuring news, it's not surprising that the world's largest agrochemical manufacturers are the seed industry giants. With people all over the world now growing more food, ownership of food seeds becomes an issue worthy of major consideration.

Monsanto, the world's fifth largest agrochemical company, is the world's biggest seed company. DuPont, the world's sixth largest agrochemical company, is the world's second biggest seed company. Syngenta, with 19 percent of the market share of agrochemicals, is the world's third largest seed company. Bayer, holding the largest market share, is the world's seventh biggest seed company. (Source: <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html>)

World's top seed & pesticide firms:

(Company - Sales 2007 US\$ - % Market Share)

1. Bayer (Germany)	\$7,458m	19%
2. Syngenta (Switz.)	\$7,285m	19%
3. BASF (Germany)	\$4,297m	11%
4. Dow AgroSc (USA)	\$3,779m	10%
5. Monsanto (USA)	\$3,599m	9%
6. DuPont (USA)	\$2,369m	6%

(Source: www.agrow.com)

These companies are all gene giants so you'll never be able to save any of their seeds and because most are being created for herbicide resistance, the worldwide market for agrochemicals is growing by

10 percent per year. This situation not only compromises our ability to feed ourselves, but the practice of applying ever increasing quantities of poisons to the soil borders on an insane war on nature.

A simple solution to this chemical fix lies in the ability to access open-pollinated seeds, produced by naturally occurring pollination, without human manipulation of the seed's genetic makeup. Growing food with open-pollinated seeds means you can save seeds from the resulting plants, knowing they will provide the same food value and performance for future harvests. It's what our forebears have been doing for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, only around two percent of food seeds today are open-pollinated and most are in the hands of a few small seed companies and grassroots seed saving organizations around the world.

The "glyphosate gap" is growing fast because at least 14 weed species on five continents have developed resistance due to massive applications of glyphosate. While BASF, Syngenta, Bayer, Dow and DuPont compete to fill the gap, farmers are employing more toxic chemicals to kill the resistant weeds. Agrochemical giants prefer to describe the resistance problem as a business opportunity. In the words of Syngenta's Crop Science CEO, John Atki, "Resistance is healthy because we have to innovate." I think resistance is imperative because we have to eat.

Carolyn Herriot is author of *A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide*.

www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

Seed havens

BC Seeds, a FarmFolk/CityFolk project supporting BC's organic seed growers. (www.bcseeds.org)

The Salt Spring Seed Sanctuary, learning centre and network, encourages local food and seed production, is committed to evaluating and maintaining records for all edible, medicinal and useful crops that can be grown in Canada. (www.saltspringseeds.com/catalog/seedsanctuary.htm)

The Sunshine Coast Seed Collective is developing education and resources, as well as a local seed registry and seed bank.

Seeds of Diversity is Canada's grassroots seed saving network, where growers can find heritage varieties of "tried and true" seeds from their resource list of open-pollinated seed sources. I recommend that anyone starting to save food seeds should read the organization's booklet *How to Save Your own Vegetable*

Seeds. (Purchase through www.seeds.ca for \$12).

There are now 40 Seedy Saturdays across Canada. Last month, the 7th Annual Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday set a attendance record of 1,850 people, a 12% increase from last year. (www.seeds.ca/ev/events.php)

Sample seed data form

Location: neighbourhood, mini geoclimatic zone, &/or street address

Species: refers to common species name

Variety: refers to common variety name

Isolation Distance: distance to other plants of same species, or description of method of isolation to prevent unwanted crossing

Plants: number of parent plants grown, necessary to insure genetic diversity

History: seed source and unique characteristics

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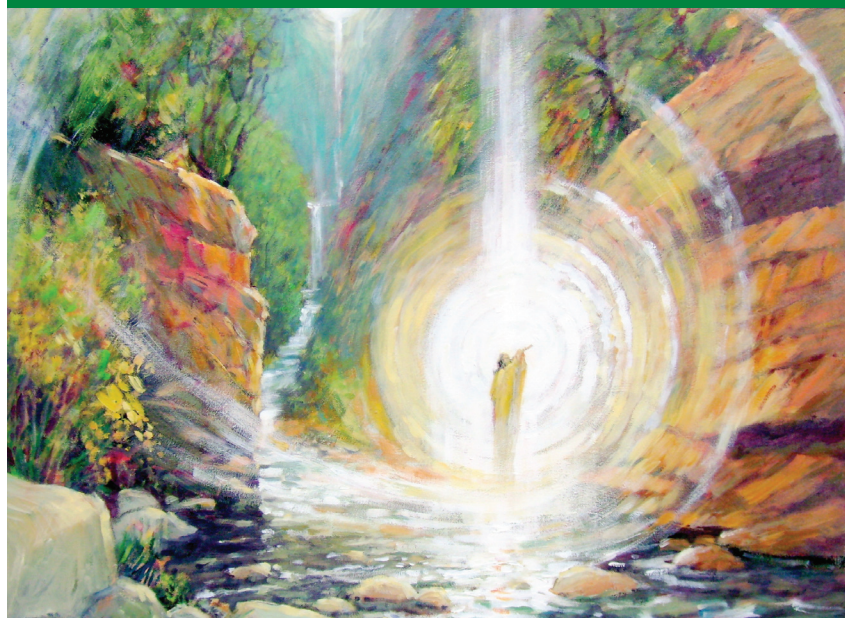
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Leila Stuart, BA, LLB, RMT, is a Yoga teacher and Registered Massage Therapist with over 30 years of yoga and teaching experience. Her 280 hour experiential Anatomy of Yoga training is unique in North America. She teaches functional anatomy, movement repatterning and yoga therapy to yoga teachers and serious students, all within the context of yoga philosophy.



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From suffering to peace

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

SPIRITUALITY

I READ about a stoic philosopher in ancient Greece who, when told that his son had died in an accident, replied, "I knew he was not immortal." Is that surrender? If it is, I don't want it. There are some situations in which surrender seems unnatural and inhuman.

Being cut off from your feelings is not surrender. But we don't know what his inner state was when he said those words. In certain extreme situations, it may still be impossible for you to accept the Now. But you always get a second chance at surrender.

Your first chance is to surrender each moment to the reality of that moment. Knowing that what is cannot be undone

you will likely have a strong urge to escape from it rather than surrender to it. You don't want to feel what you feel. What could be more normal? But there is no escape, no way out. There are many pseudo escapes – work, drink, drugs, anger, projection, suppression, and so on – but they don't free you from the pain. Suffering does not diminish in intensity when you make it unconscious.

When you deny emotional pain, everything you do or think, as well as your relationships, becomes contaminat-

See how the miracle of surrender transmutes deep suffering into deep peace. This is your crucifixion. Let it become your resurrection and ascension.

– because it already is – you say yes to what is or accept what isn't. Then you do what you have to do, whatever the situation requires. If you abide in this state of acceptance, you create no more negativity, no more suffering, no more unhappiness. You then live in a state of non-resistance, a state of grace and lightness, free of struggle.

Whenever you are unable to do that, whenever you miss that chance – either because you are not generating enough conscious presence to prevent some habitual and unconscious resistance pattern or because the condition is so extreme as to be absolutely unacceptable to you – then you are creating some form of pain, some form of suffering. It may look as if the situation is creating the suffering, but ultimately this is not so; your resistance is.

Now here is your second chance at surrender: if you cannot accept what is outside, accept what is inside. If you cannot accept the external condition, accept the internal condition. This means: do not resist the pain. Allow it to be there. Surrender to the grief, despair, fear, loneliness or whatever form the suffering takes. Witness it without labelling it mentally. Embrace it. Then see how the miracle of surrender transmutes deep suffering into deep peace. This is your crucifixion. Let it become your resurrection and ascension.

When your pain is deep, all talk of surrender will probably seem futile and meaningless. When your pain is deep,

ed with it. You broadcast it, so to speak, as the energy you emanate and others will pick it up subliminally. You attract and manifest whatever corresponds to your inner state.

When there is no way out, there is still always a way through. So don't turn away from the pain. Face it. Feel it fully – don't think about it! Give all your attention to the feeling, not to the person, event or situation that seems to have caused it. Don't let the mind use the pain to create a victim identity for yourself. Feeling sorry for yourself and telling others your story will keep you stuck in suffering. Since it is impossible to get away from the feeling, the only possibility of change is to move into it; otherwise, nothing will shift. So give your complete attention to what you feel. As you go into the feeling, be intensely alert. At first it may seem like a dark and terrifying place and when the urge to turn away from it comes, observe it but don't act on it.

Keep putting your attention on the pain; keep feeling the grief, the fear, the dread, the loneliness, whatever it is. Stay alert, stay present – present with your whole Being. As you do so, you are bringing a light into this darkness. This is the flame of your consciousness.

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Universal intelligence

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

WHEN I was in Maui recently, I watched a mother whale and her calf cavorting in the ocean. She was teaching her baby how to slap the water with its pectoral fin while some distance away, a male rested lazily near the top of the water, keeping pace with the mom and calf. I was told that a male – not the father – would attach itself to a mother and baby to watch over and protect them.

I marvelled at the perfection of nature. For instance, how do the whales know when it is time to swim to warmer climes? How do they manage to come back to the same place each year?

Then I thought about monarch butter-

flies. These delicate creatures fly 50 miles per day making their trip from Canada to Mexico. Why do they go all the way to Mexico when California is so much closer? Why don't they get lost?

It is inconceivable that all living things can possess such amazing potential, other than humans. I believe we have incredible, untapped potential, but have forgotten how to access it.

I also remember reading about homing pigeons. They could be put in a box and driven 500 hundred miles away by car and upon release effortlessly find their way home.

There was also a study about a dog that would move from his sleeping place to the front door at the exact moment his master, many miles away in his downtown office, decided it was time to go home and reached for his briefcase.

The plant kingdom is equally as amazing. There is a type of tree in the forest, which only releases seeds when there is tremendous heat, such as a forest fire, clearly showing that the forest has a built-in mechanism to regenerate itself.

Whether we are talking about the plant or animal kingdoms, we realize that amazing wisdom and genius are built-in and that it extends far beyond the ability to simply survive.

It is inconceivable that all living things can possess such amazing potential, other than humans. What is our wisdom, our genius? Apparently, we use only 10 percent of our brains. What is the other 90 percent used for? I believe we have incredible, untapped potential, but have forgotten how to access it.

In the animal kingdom, wisdom is intu-

itive. Animals do not use words or read books and they likely give little thought to what other animals think. Humans have the ability to use language, but that is also our limitation. We speak, think and learn using words. We are limited by our vocabulary. No doubt, you have known people whose first language is one other than English and you have heard them attempt to express a thought that was difficult to translate into English. "I don't know how you would say it in English," they typically say, despite having an excellent command of the English language.

It is astounding to me that we humans think of our babies as blank slates to be filled with information. We assume they

know nothing other than what we teach them. Children learn that you get smart by listening to adults and by obtaining information from books or computers. It is no wonder our intuitive ways of knowing get shut down early in our lives.

Think of the amazing things early people figured out on their own: from Socrates to Copernicus and from Aristotle to the early Egyptians. How did the Chinese, more than 3,000 years ago, figure out energy patterns in the body, acupuncture points and which plants could heal the body?

I believe there is a universal intelligence and that these humans were accessing it. I believe we all have the power to access the universal intelligence, but we have to learn to use our minds differently.

When we really quiet our minds, completely stopping the mind chatter, and if we do this long enough and regularly enough, we can begin to tune in to that intelligence. If we create that space, inner knowing can enter. In this way, the mind can be used to explore the vast intelligence that surrounds and enfolds us.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of *Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution*. For more articles, permission to reprint and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca

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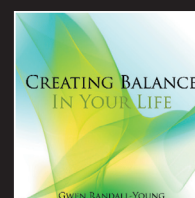
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How the mind works

by Paramahansa Nithyananda

IN LIFE, we constantly create either shafts of pain or joy. Once you create a shaft of pain, you try to break it. In the same way, if you create a shaft of joy, you try to elongate it. But you don't understand that you can neither elongate the joy shaft nor break the pain shaft – simply because the shaft itself doesn't exist.

I would like to share with you an interesting learning from my days of spiritual wandering. In the forests of Northern India, the hunters use a trap to catch birds. They tie a rope between two trees. In the middle of the rope, they secure a wooden stick. This is actually a hunter's trap for birds.

You may think, "How can a bird be trapped with a small stick? How is it

possible?" Actually, all they do is just hang the stick between two trees using a rope; that's all. When a bird comes and sits on the stick, the bird's own weight turns the whole stick upside down; it turns topsy-turvy. The moment it turns upside down and loses its sense of balance, it feels totally shaken and tightens its grip on the stick. It simply holds on to the stick as if its life depends on it. Because it is hanging upside down, it thinks, "If I *unclutch* from this stick, what will happen? I will fall and die."

There is no record that any bird has ever fallen and broken its head. But the bird does not have the intelligence to realize this. It keeps hanging on. By not letting go, not only does it lose its freedom, it loses its life too because ulti-

mately the hunter traps it.

Just like the bird, you don't realize that if you just drop your mind, that very moment you can be liberated. You can simply start flying.

The same fear that the bird clinging to the stick had, you have now. Your fear and the bird's fear are one and the same. The bird believes that it can't let go; if it does, it will die. Similarly, you hold on to your mind and feel, "I can't let go. If I start trusting that I am unconnected, unclutched, independent... I might be lost."

YOGA

When we *unclutch*, the first thing that will happen to us will be an inner healing effect – a deep silence and peace in us. Second, that inner healing will start radiating as physical well-being, which is our health. Third, naturally it will start radiating in our relationships also. Fourth, because these three are going beautifully, we will be creative and productive.

An instant meditation

You can try this technique of *unclutching* at any time, whenever you remember. The moment you see

.....
Just let go and you will never fall and die. You will only become liberated to your full potential... When we unclutch, the first thing that will happen to us will be an inner healing effect – a deep silence and peace.

After four or five hours, the hunter comes leisurely, takes the bird, puts it in the cage and leaves. Now the bird neither has the freedom to fly nor the stick to balance. The foolish bird doesn't know that if it had just let go of the stick, it could have simply flown away.

In the same way, you hold on to whatever you think is your identity and security – your education, your mind, your life, your relationships or your bank balance. Death ultimately comes to remove the stick – your identity. Then you are neither a liberated soul, nor are you able to hold on to your identity. You will neither have the freedom, nor will you have the stick of your identity that you are clutching because the stick itself is an illusion.

If the bird lets go and relaxes, it may take one or two moments to balance itself, but it will never fall and die. When it leaves the stick, maybe for a few seconds it will fall, but then it will adjust itself and start flying. Just let go and you will never fall and die. You will only become liberated to your full potential. All you need to do is trust that you are *unclutched* even if you don't trust that it is still the truth.

a thought coming, do not give meaning to it. You give it meaning only if you connect it with your past. Without giving meaning to it, just remember to *unclutch* and see what happens.

The moment you remember, "Let me *unclutch* from this thought; let me not give meaning to it," for a few seconds there will be a small, silent gap. The moment you are aware that there is a silence, it will become one more thought. Then *unclutch* from that thought also. Then again there will be a gap of a few seconds. Then one more thought will come: "I am in silence" or "I am *unclutching*." *Unclutch* from that thought also. Just the gap or the silence should become longer and longer. That is the whole idea.

Paramahansa Nithyananda visits Vancouver March 10-16. For a schedule of his free talks and to register for his workshops, visit www.LifeBlissCanada.org or call 604-628-4479. Nithyananda is recognized in India as one of the great spiritual teachers. His meditations, yoga and life solutions techniques are popular with more than two million people. (See www.YouTube.com)



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BC-STV more choice for voters

By Nick Loenen



IN BC'S CURRENT electoral system, the political parties – and increasingly only the party leaders – control which names will appear on the ballot. Voters are given a list of candidates from which they may choose one name only. The public is forced to express absolute support for a local candidate, a party leader, a party and a complete set of policies, thereby having to reject all other options.

BC-STV is very different because it de-links this bundle of choices to make voting more meaningful and less frustrating. In everything from business to leisure activities, we have seen an explosion of progress with people having more choice. A 500-channel TV universe is open to us

frustration. Vote splitting forces many people to vote strategically, meaning that they do not vote for their preferred candidate. Over the course of 20 years, in seven elections, Social Credit leader WAC Bennett claimed, "A Conservative or Liberal vote is a vote for the Socialists." In the 2005 election, potential vote splitting between NDP and Green prevented many voters from casting their vote for the candidates they really believed in. This should not be the case in a democratic system and it can change on May 12.

Party apologists suggest voters don't want too much choice because it makes voting too complicated. No one wants to do research on 15 or more candidates, we are told. This is nonsense. Voters may rank as many or as few candidates as they wish. Someone may decide to rank only one candidate. That is a perfectly valid ballot and would work exactly as the present voting system. Again, this is choice for voters. The BC-STV ballot can be used very simply or with more options; it is up to each voter.

Those who wish to vote as they have

In everything from business to leisure activities, we have seen an explosion of progress with people having more choice.

and breakfast cereals come in 30 varieties while our politics remains frozen in time, effectively stifling democracy and citizens' engagement.

Instead of being forced to select only one candidate, in the proposed BC-STV system, voters may rank any number of candidates. Parties will offer multiple candidates and voters may rank within one party slate or among the slates of different parties. By ranking candidates, voters express a preference among candidates, which is far more realistic as very few people believe that one candidate is absolutely good and the others totally bad.

Nor will voters have to worry about wasting their votes on losing candidates. If a particular candidate is eliminated, votes are not lost. They are transferred to the remaining candidates of the individual's choosing.

Choice gives voters power; it places them in the driver's seat. With the BC-STV system, elections will be less about parties and candidates and more about the wishes of voters. Election results will display voters' true wishes.

The predominant complaint heard by the Citizens' Assembly concerned voter

done in the past may do so. The proposed voting system places no obligation on anyone. If you want to keep voting the way you always have, you are not prevented from doing so. No one will be forced to change their ways or habits, but BC-STV presents a new opportunity for a more meaningful ballot box experience than is now possible.

In 2005, a high school class in Smithers, BC, showed the difference between the current electoral system and the proposed BC-STV in choosing pizza toppings. Using the current system, 36 percent ended up with pizzas that were not among their top three choices. When they voted for the toppings using the BC-STV model, only two of the 74 students didn't get one of their top three choices. It is a telling example that we can do better.

On May 12, the choice is really about who will end up being empowered: the citizens of BC or the political parties. The choice is yours.

Nick Loenen is a former Richmond City Councillor and MLA. Contact: nick.loenen@stv.ca More BC-STV info: www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public or www.stv.ca, 604-637-3551

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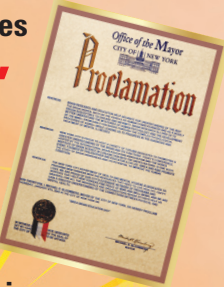
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A time of wonders

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

THIS IS a time of wonders. That statement may seem totally counter-intuitive and blind to the enormous troubles ahead, but I can't ignore the perpetual voice that sings within me of the incredible possibilities at our fingertips.

If I look one way, I can see that we are racing towards the greatest ecological meltdown since the last great extinction event – the *cretacean* – that wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Time moves slowly and a human lifetime is long and yet we are so close to winning the collective Darwin Award, given every year to those individuals who do such stupid things that they do us the favour of removing their genes from the gene pool. I write these words on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, who I am sure would never have contemplated the possibility of the entire human race winning such an award one day.

Yet, if I look the other way, I see the road to the solar age, shining with promise and hope. I see the successful elimination of fossil fuels, children learning eco-

defeat and embrace instead the brilliance of hope? We need three things and they are all within our grasp.

The first is the willingness to act. By acting, we switch on our motivation, which releases a cascade of possibilities. One phone call asking, "How can I help?" is enough – perhaps to a local non-profit society; perhaps to the BC-STV campaign office (campaigning for the Single Transferable Vote in the May 12 referendum); perhaps to the office of the greenest, local candidate in the forthcoming provincial election.

The second is the willingness to persist. If at first you don't succeed, try again. Nothing of any worth was achieved without persistence. Persistence means learning, training, practising. You may have a vision that takes five or 10 years to fulfill, such as turning the street where you live into a community of sharing people, growing food, installing solar panels and planting trees. Alternatively, it might be kick-started with one rousing street party, organized with neighbours with a few weeks' notice.

What we need is faith at a deeper level, which does not require evidence at every step. Faith that humans have the ability to succeed... just as we succeeded in ending slavery.

logical literacy in every school, Earth's cities becoming urban paradises. I see farms the world over adopting organic, butterfly-loving methods of cultivation and Earth's working forests being treated like the temples they are, with reverence and love.

I have held this vision for more than 40 years and yet I have never felt it so close, so totally within our reach. My hopefulness does not stem from any recent intimacy with BC bud, but from my knowledge of communities around the world that are making it happen. It stems from Copenhagen where 36 percent of commuter trips are by bicycle; from San Francisco, well on the way to achieving 100 percent zero waste by 2020; from the small town of Güssing, in eastern Austria, whose people have eliminated 93 percent of their carbon footprint by building a variety of solar, biomass and other energy systems. I have just finished writing my new book on global climate solutions and I can feel the vibrancy of so much innovation and effort all around the world.

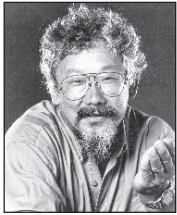
So what do we need to turn away from the dark path of cynicism, negativity and

The third is the determination to stay positive and not be defeated by the apparent hopelessness of larger problems, such as the need to transform global capitalism, the domination of the US military industrial complex or the ecological collapse of the world's oceans. Millions share your hopes, confident that success is possible.

What we need is faith at a deeper level, which does not require evidence at every step. Faith that humans have the ability to succeed in this challenge, just as we succeeded in ending slavery, winning the right of working people to form a labour union, defeating fascism and so much more.

The love that so many people feel for our troubled planet comes from that same deep place and it's not going away. Our task is to hold onto it and act on it – now.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association and the author of several books. He lives in Victoria. www.earthfuture.com, www.guydauncey.com



Google maps the oceans

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

ENVIRONMENT

W E HUMANS are air-breathing landlubbers and that shapes the way we see and treat the world. We don't think much about what's underwater or underground. So we've been dumping garbage into the oceans and taking what we want from them for years without considering the consequences. We've never had to look at any of it – until now.

We're starting to see what lies below the surface and it's not always a pretty picture. We see massive islands of plastic and other debris swirling in gyres around the world. We see 9,000-year-old, glass sponge reefs off the coast of BC that, until recently, were torn apart by trawl nets dragged across the ocean floor. We see the effects of climate change on Arctic sea ice and on the animals that live under the sea.

"Some of these treasures are being destroyed before we even know what's there," Dr. Earle said, adding that often as soon as people find out about an ocean resource, they exploit it. Part of the idea behind Ocean in Google Earth is to show people what we have and what we stand to lose if we don't smarten up. "People will be aware of not only what's there but what's been lost," Dr. Earle said. "People don't seem to widely appreciate how important it is to protect the systems that give us life."

And the oceans do give us life. Half of the world's oxygen comes from the ocean. In the process of photosynthesis, phytoplankton release oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide that would oth-

Part of the idea behind Ocean in Google Earth is to show people what we have and what we stand to lose if we don't smarten up.

We'll be able to see even more, thanks to a recent initiative by Google, along with *National Geographic*, the BBC and scientists and other partners from around the world. Google is adding the world's oceans to its extensive Earth mapping. In a phone conversation with David Suzuki Foundation staff, John Hanke, director of Google Earth and Maps, admitted, "We had really overlooked two thirds of the planet." Partly because of prodding from oceanographer Sylvia Earle, the company has embarked on a massive project as part of Google Earth 5.0 to map the oceans using sonar imaging, high-resolution and 3-D photography, video and a variety of other techniques and content.

Although the emerging picture is sometimes bleak, there's a positive side. "If we can just see enough soon enough to pull back and give these areas a chance to recover, that's my greatest hope," Dr. Earle told us.

Mr. Hanke and Dr. Earle, who is explorer in residence at *National Geographic* and the founder of the Deep Search Foundation, said the project will allow us to learn more about human impacts on the Earth's oceans. Dr. Earle noted that we have explored only about five percent of the ocean's depths and protected less than one percent, yet the oceans cover more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface.

erwise contribute to global warming. And when phytoplankton die, they sink to the bottom of the ocean... The phytoplankton are also an important food source for ocean animals ranging from small fish to giant whales, which, in turn, feed other animals up the food chain, including humans.

That's just one example of how important our oceans are and of how everything in nature is interconnected.

We can only hope this new endeavour will lead to more concern for the state of the oceans and of the need to protect them. The glass sponge reefs, for example, are being considered for formal protection, and public support could make the difference. As Dr. Earle noted, "You can't care if you don't know and this a new way of knowing."

Part of what makes it exciting is that it's not just a tool for scientists and academics. "It's going to be a lot of fun for adults and kids to learn about the oceans," Mr. Hanke said, noting that the free program, which includes multiple layers of content and information, will continue to expand as more data from scientists, explorers and others is added.

We can no longer afford to be blind to the state of our oceans. Let's hope this will open our eyes before there's nothing left to see but destruction.

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Bernie, Buddha, *and* belief systems

Everything I need to know about non-attachment, I learned from Wall Street

by Geoff Olson



photo montage: Peter Sircom Bromley

ONCE READ a short story, whose author eludes both my memory and Google's, in which the narrator discovers his alarmed mother at home, floating up around the ceiling. The poor woman has stopped believing in gravity, with lighter-than-air results. Alexandra Penney must have felt the same way when the ground dropped out from under her feet. Last fall, the 69-year-old artist, author and former editor of *Self* magazine discovered that her life savings had disappeared, courtesy Wall Street fraud artist Bernie Madoff, who allegedly bilked a total of \$50 billion from his clients. On her blog *The Bag Lady Papers*, Penney recalls a call from a friend, alerting her to Madoff's arrest. Wasn't he the guy who handled her money, the friend asked? One and the same. "Before I reached for a bedtime Tylenol PM, I Googled the Hemlock Society. I wanted to know a painless way to die," Penney notes.

Madoff's investors had come to him by "invitation only," joining a charmed circle of wealthy clients whose portfolios flourished under his guidance. Penney's investor profile wasn't quite as toney as the others, however. She had been tucking away money since she was 16 years old. "Not a Penney was inherited," she asserts. "Not one cent was from my divorce. I earned all of it myself, through a long string of jobs that included working as a cashier at Rosedale fish market in New York City in my 20s, and later, writing bestselling sex books."

After her account with Madoff evaporated, the once financially comfortable Penney had to confront a brave new world of budget motels, pawned jewellery and public transit. In one recent blog post, she writes of buying a \$20 MetroCard. Instead of tossing the old one, she threw the new one by mistake into a trashcan on the platform. "It was too tall to reach into and I immediately wanted to turn it upside down and dump the contents to find my card."

Throughout these humiliating initiations into the underclass, the aptly named Penney doesn't bother to disguise her understandable loathing of Madoff. "I never even knew what Madoff looked like. But now I obliterate his face when I see it on television. I think he's a sociopath who said he lost \$50 billion for self-aggrandizement when it was probably closer to the banded-about number of \$17 billion." Throughout the blog, she abbreviates the Wall Street wizard's name to MF.

Ironically, Penney's had a lifelong fear of ending up a bag lady, "cold, alone and abandoned." Over the years, she cleared up her garden variety anxieties through therapy, but her "bag lady fears" were more persistent. Her therapist told her the best way to deal with them was to put her money in a safe place. "Which I did. With the MF."

Many of Madoff's more than 13,000 clients invested all their Fabergé eggs in one basket, ironically thinking that one flawless financial genius would diversify their portfolios. When the Ponzi scheme evaporated – Madoff turned himself in saying, "It was all just one big lie" – the Great Oz was revealed as a nebbishy con man clutching a brocaded curtain.

Madoff may seem an extreme case, but his con game wasn't that far removed from other dodgy financial schemes on Wall Street, such as the "black box" derivatives that accelerated the credit death spiral. But this is hardly anything new. Bank failures, speculative bubbles and their well-heeled architects have a long and lofty history on both sides of the Atlantic. In his novel *Little Dorrit*, one of Dickens' main characters is a "brilliant" banker by the name of Merdle, who could effortlessly double the investment of clients. The cream of London society invested in Merdle and lost their life savings as a result. (Merdle sounds like Madoff and Alexandra Penney sounds like a Dickens character herself.)

Margaret Atwood's Massey Lecture series, *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*, echoes both Alexandra Penney and the fictional mother who stopped believing in gravity. "I knew from fairy tales . . . that if you ceased to believe in fairies they would drop dead," observes Atwood. "If I stopped believing in banks, would they too expire?" Marg knows exactly what would happen if we stopped believing in the places where we stash our cash: we'd have a run on the banks. Customers might even discover the awful truth of fractional reserve banking: loans exceed deposits. At any given time, these marbled monuments hold only a small fraction of hard currency relative to money loaned out. Ergo, it's in all our best interest to keep believing our money is safe in steel vaults, protected from robbers and panicked grannies by large men with guns. But if too many of us believe we won't be able get our money out in times of crisis, the whole game becomes shaky for everyone.

Since the financial market's own version of 9/11, the collective belief in free market capitalism has taken quite a hit. Not surprisingly, the professional absurdists have shown more common sense than the business press. "The stock market's just a consensual mass delusion based on fictitious valuing of abstract assets," noted fictional news reporter John Oliver on *The Daily Show*. Yet, even now, financial advisors and business press shills are still humming the same old tune, which might as well be Journey's *Don't Stop Believin'*. No matter how bad the financial news gets, the bull market will return one day, we're told. Two years, say some. Three years, say others – seven years on the outside. Just have faith and buy low.

The central paradox is that bull markets are turbocharged by the very thing that ultimately undermines them: herd behaviour. That's been obvious ever since the nineteenth century when Charles Mackay penned

It's in all our best interest to keep believing our money is safe in steel vaults, protected from robbers and panicked grannies by large men with guns. But if too many of us believe we won't be able get our money out in times of crisis, the whole game becomes shaky for everyone.

Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds. The author outlined John Law's ruinous sale of Louisiana swampland to the government of France, and the "Tulipomania" of 17th century Holland (in a fit of speculation on tulips, certain varieties of bulbs became more valuable by weight than gold – and next to worthless when the tulip market collapsed).

These ruinous episodes always make for great, rubbernecking entertainment if *schadenfreude* is your sort of thing. Today, it's the smackdown of the millennium, as Obama's tag team of optimism, "Hope n' Change," takes on Wall Street's "Greed n' Envy." Yet the new president's too-little-too-late efforts to get tough with the masters of the universe are not encouraging, especially considering the tulip floggers in his cabinet (like former president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York Timothy Geithner and former World Bank Chief Economist Lawrence Summers). As noted on bloomberg .com, almost half the people on Obama's Transition Economic Advisory



Board "have held fiduciary positions at companies that, to one degree or another, either fried their financial statements, helped send the world into an economic tailspin or both."

Barack Obama instituted new rules limiting the hiring of lobbyists into his administration. Within days, the "Optimist in Chief" exempted a number of people from the rule he had just proclaimed. Adding insult to absurdity, Timothy Geithner has hired the lobbyist from Goldman Sachs as his chief of staff.

So once again it's the foxes guarding the henhouse. Although there's nothing wrong with Obama counselling his people to follow the "better angels of our nature," let's hope America's angels handle money better than the tooth fairy or Bernie Madoff.

As for Madoff himself, Frank Rich of *The New York Times* describes him as "a pillar of both the Wall Street and Jewish communities," who even managed to swindle The Simon Wiesenthal Centre. This smiling sociopath, a former NASDAQ chairman and a trustee at Yeshiva University, turned out to have no academic background in finance. Presumably, his political science degree was a better guide to Machiavelli than macroeconomics.

Madoff never acted alone, critics say. Former investment manager Harry Markopolos tried for almost a decade to alert the Security and Exchange Commission to "the red flags" in Madoff's dealings. As early as 2000, he supplied the agency with information that he believes should have triggered an investigation. "I gift wrapped

and delivered the largest Ponzi scheme to them," Markopolos told a Congressional hearing in January, according to Reuters. Multiple efforts to alert the authorities were met with a spooky silence and, at one point, Markopolos began to fear for his life and the safety of his family. "We knew that he was one of the most powerful men on Wall Street and in a position to easily end our careers or worse," he said.

Markopolos was perceptive and brave, but where were the other wise men warning of an impending crash, back when many of us would have pegged Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as characters from *The Dukes of Hazard*? Not in the SEC or anywhere else in the mirrored canyons of Wall Street. Apparently not around the manicured quadrangles of Harvard or the faculty rooms of Wharton Business School either. If there were whistleblowers, their voices weren't reliably relayed through the newsrooms of our glorious free press.

This high-flying market crashed on the watch of the

best and brightest – the managerial class for the global elite, the top 10 percent of the population that do the work of the top one percent. These polite, educated people showed up afterwards to pick through the wreckage and examine the flight recorder. But they also helped build and paint this screwball contraption in the first place and cheered while it did barrel rolls in a sky, unclouded by regulations. Many of them voluntarily boarded the thing themselves and toasted their ascent as the engines inhaled the last whiff of fumes.

We were all in the scam together to some degree or another. To believe, as

most still do, that the gross domestic product can continue to grow faster than the ecology it's embedded in, is sheer lunacy. But as writer Robert Anton Wilson once said, "There's a seeker born every minute." Hundreds of millions of seekers joined in on the global real estate bubble, from subprime-seeking schmucks to home-flipping mini-magnates. These suburban berserkers inspired the making of television shows like *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Design Invasion*, *The Big Flip*, *Home to Flip*, *Flip This House* and *Flip That House*. Many of those productions are still rotated on HGTV, a channel entirely devoted to real estate and reno-porn.

Now that we're scratching our heads, wondering what the hell happened with our fractured nest eggs, it might help to ask some deep questions about our desires and why they often get us into trouble. East beats west in addressing this problem. "Release your attachment to something that is not there in reality, but is a perception," advises Buddhist scholar Khyentse Rinpoche. If that sounds like it might be advice for burned investors, there's good reason; Rinpoche offered these words of wisdom in the illuminating 2003 documentary *Sandcastles: Buddhism and Global Finance*.

Back in 2003, the makers of *Sandcastles* had cottoned on to the illusory nature of global capital markets, in which herd behaviour can tank a firm or an entire country in the time it takes to order lunch. How can a system that contingent be "real"? Buddhism holds that the nature of reality is both

continued p.22...

...Olson - from p.21

transient and relational; all things have existence only by virtue of their relationship to other things, none of which are permanent. There is no fixed self, only a stream of continuous perceptions, according to Buddhists. That notion is echoed in the film by sociologist Saskia Sassen: "It's not that there are \$83 trillion (in the global capital markets). It is essentially a continuous set of movements. It disappears and it reappears." We might as well be talking about virtu-

failure of the very financial instruments that helped drive the US residential real estate bubble. Why would anyone do such an insane thing? Because, Lewis says, the jig was up on sub primes – the players at the top were running out of suckers in the mortgage loans market to fuel their casino capitalism, but they could squeeze some more bucks out of multiplied bets that hedged on the subprime loans' predictable collapse.

And that takes us right back to belief systems – or as writer Robert Anton Wil-

downturn, there's yet another massive transfer of wealth from the rubes to the upper tiers of society. Today, the crises are systemic and inherent in the nature of capital. The process of peak and crash is as dependable as a mass death of June bugs. But there are always the gentlemen gaming the system, who have the inside knowledge of how to profit from the inevitable crash. This time around, if it weren't subprime "tranches" and "black box" derivatives, it would have been something else.

mess feather their nests with multimillion-dollar bonuses.

Credit comes from the Latin, *credo* – "believe, trust." What happens when enough of us in the industrialized West stop believing not just in the stock market and big banks, but also in university economics departments, corporations, law enforcement agencies, the legal profession, government, the mainstream media, public relations departments and organized religion? Not that these entities deserve our unquestioning faith, or ever did. But if enough rubes became refuseniks, what would rush in to fill the vacuum – a "failed state" scenario or a revolutionary chance at what philosopher Morris Berman calls "the reenchantment of the world"? If we start to think of our social construction of reality as no more real than a Hollywood film set, will the ground disappear from beneath our feet? Would it be like no longer believing in gravity and finding ourselves floating weightless in the air? Perhaps after immense disruptions to society, we would discover who we really are as human beings, once we rule out who we really aren't.

On her blog, Penney describes herself sitting in a small kitchen, "writing with lunatic speed." She hops out a couple of times a day "to drive around the 'hood trying to pick up a wireless signal on my laptop so I can email out to the world. No phone, no 'net, no cable – it's my new way of life." Perhaps she won't be out on the streets after all. Her blog efforts have paid off with a book deal, but she continues to wonder how the rule of law went sideways in the case of Madoff, who's now confined to the swank New York penthouse that's in his wife's name.

Penney's words could be a coda for the continuing lack of accountability for the market collapse on Wall Street and Washington: "Once again, I ask, can somebody please tell me why the Mother of all [dingbats] is still not in jail????"

www.geoffolson.com



Illustration: Geoff Olson

al particles in a supercollider, or angels dancing on the head of a pin.

Eastern philosophy, however, has little to say about remedying institutional problems or putting shackles on the guys who burned through billions of shekels. This mess wasn't about a bunch of poor, black homeowners taking down the global economic system. In his revealing study of the market meltdown, former Saloman Brothers employee and author Michael Lewis argues that the subprime mortgages were only the front end of the scam. Some investment banks encouraged short-selling against the subprime-bundled securities, in effect inviting side bets on the

son abbreviated them, BS. The current mess isn't an aberrant form of capitalism. It's business as usual. In his crisis of faith before Congress, former federal reserve Alan Greenspan said he now believes he was mistaken to think that financial institutions would self-regulate. Somehow, 83-year-old Greenspan failed to learn anything from Enron, the Savings and Loan scandal and the 1980s HUD scandal, to say nothing of the Great Depression.

Every few decades or less there's a whole new crop of true believers looking to win big, through tulips, swampland, tech stocks, residential real estate, energy trading, you name it. And with every

If the sheeple should have learned anything throughout this most recent fleecing – and we aren't even halfway through this romp in the pasture – it's that a little scepticism and a refusal to follow the herd is a healthy thing. Particularly since the shears are getting sharper and the fleecings more frequent.

The rule of law is based on the rational expectation that business transactions can be made in good faith and that legally binding agreements will be enforced by the state. That belief has been deeply shaken in North America and beyond, especially now that millions of jobs are evaporating across North America and the architects of this

...Writing on the wall - from p.4

to do so? The links in any chain of influence are too numerous, too complex to trace. But being aware that such chains exist, that we can choose to join them,

Actions of conscience confirm the link between our fate and that of everyone and everything else on the planet...

and that lasting change doesn't occur in their absence, is one of the primary ways to sustain hope, especially when our actions seem too insignificant to amount to anything.

Even if the struggle outlives us, con-

viction matters. Actions of conscience confirm the link between our fate and that of everyone and everything else on the planet, respecting and reinforcing

the fundamental connections without which life itself is impossible. Whether we flourish or perish depends on how well we can honor the interdependence that Martin Luther King evoked: "We are caught in an inescapable network

of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

We don't have to tackle every issue, but if we avoid them all, if we remain silent in the face of cruelty, injustice and oppression, we sacrifice part of our soul. In this sense, we keep on acting based on our conscience because by doing so we affirm our humanity – the core of who we are and what we hold in common with others.

Excerpted from The Impossible Will Take a Little While by Paul Rogat Loeb. His other books include Soul of a Citizen. Loeb speaks in Vancouver on April 8. See box at right.

How do we work for change in tough political and economic times?

Paul Loeb, author of the bestsellers *Soul of a Citizen* and *The Impossible Will Take a Little While* explores what keeps us going despite all the obstacles. He speaks at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 580 W. Hastings Street, April 8, 6:30pm. Info: jashwort@sfu.ca 604.528.5590 or 1.877.528.5591

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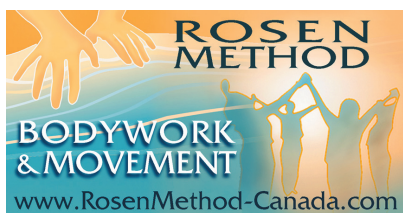


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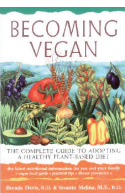
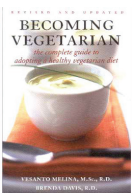
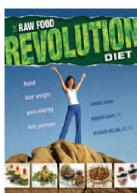
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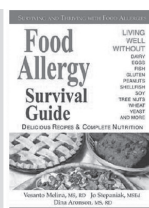
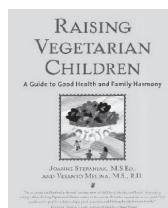
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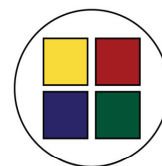
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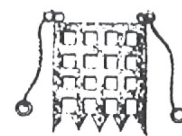
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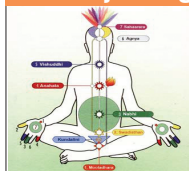
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Cultural exchange

FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead



Natar Ungalaaq stars in *The Necessities of Life (Ce Qu'il Faut Pour Vivre)* as an Inuit hunter forced by illness to a Quebec City sanatorium.

The *Necessities of Life (Ce Qu'il Faut Pour Vivre)* is a fish-out-of-water drama about an Inuit hunter forced by illness to move into a Quebec City sanatorium during the tuberculosis epidemic of the 1950s. Separated from his family and culture for the first time, in an alien place where he cannot speak or understand the language, Tivii loses the will to live. His sympathetic nurse, Carole, arranges for a young Inuit boy named Kaki, to be transferred to his sanatorium.

Kaki, who also speaks French, offers his elder companionship and a means to communicate while Tivii takes a paternalistic interest in renewing Kaki's connection with traditional Inuit culture. Tivii rediscovers his pride and energy and the bond between the two hospital patients grows stronger.

The film, opening March 13 at Fifth Avenue Cinemas, received eight genie award nominations and was Canada's submission for the 2009 foreign language Oscar. Critics have praised its

sensitive handling of emotional life and the absorbing central performance by Natar Ungalaaq (star of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*), while Benoît Pilon, a director crossing over from documentary to make this debut feature film, provides a steady hand at the helm.

Cultural exchange is the name of the game at the Australia.com Ozflix: Australian Film Weekend, a four-day showcase of films from Down Under at the Pacific Cinémathèque (www.cinemathèque.bc.ca).

Among them is mid-teen, coming-of-age drama *Black Balloon*. It follows Thomas (Rhys Wakefield) who is desperate to fit in and meet girls at his new school in Sydney, but who suffers embarrassment about his autistic brother Charlie. A budding romance with attractive and spirited Jackie (Gemma Ward), who is in his swimming class, helps Thomas learn about acceptance and worth. As a slice of life in a crazy, loving family, it's a slight film, but enjoyable thanks especially to excellent performances by Toni Collette as the devoted, workaholic pregnant mum and Erik Thomson as the military dad who takes advice from a teddy bear. The pretty stars look older than their parts, but this has the authentic feel of someone's personal story.

Among Ozflix's crop of shorts, animation and features, there's a double-bill screening of two parts of the documentary series *Great Australian Albums*. I watched *Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds – Murder Ballads*, the 1996 album that started life as a joke (an entire album of

ballads about murder), but went on to become the band's biggest, commercial success.

As someone who has acquired a taste for Nick Cave's brooding, gothic lyricism over the years, I found this hugely enjoyable. The creative process is well documented – amazingly, the band still records live performances in the studio on tape – and the mix with archive footage going back to Cave's punk roots decades ago is done well. In interview, Cave comes across as suave, wry and characteristically dark.

Persuading pop princess Kylie Minogue to duet with him on surprise hit *Where the Wild Roses Grow* was not as difficult as one might think even though Cave admits the lyrics were "seriously creepy... with a capital 'K'". Interesting to learn that his simmering music video with songstress PJ Harvey on *Henry Lee* was done in one take. After its 52 minutes, I wanted to get the album. It screens with sunny, indie pop success of the eighties, *The Go-Betweens – 16 Lovers Lane* (15th, 5pm).

Finally, Michael McGowan's *One Week* is a road trip movie about a young man (Joshua Jackson) who, when diagnosed with cancer, decides to ride a vintage motorcycle from Toronto to Tofino, BC. It's described as "an ode to the Canadian landscape" with a soundtrack that includes Sam Roberts, Stars and Patrick Watson.

Robert Alstead maintains a blog at 2020Vancouver.com



Motivation

THIRTY SOMETHING Ishi Dinim

We tell ourselves limiting stories about inadequacy, failure, past history and lack of potential and these can become our narrative about who we are.

I'M HAVING trouble these days; sure, life is great here in paradise, yet I'm struggling with what to do next. Things are so marvelous just the way they are, but I know they are changing. I need to carefully figure out my next moves.

As spring approaches, my activity level needs to intensify to use this new time for growth effectively. I need an inspirational way to make money, something that utilizes my talents and gives back to the world. Not that I think I'm above doing any kind of work, but I'm stubborn in wanting a vocation with variation and creative elements where I feel valued.

In one breath, I feel very confident and skilled and then in the next, I grasp at how anyone would want what I have to offer. I'm out of practice and often shy to describe my good qualities to others.

Being able to consider my upcoming steps is a privilege in a world where

many people are simply "treading water" or responding to a new crisis. I'm not sure where I'd fit into Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but I feel mostly satisfied with my life. The bits that I'm not satisfied with frequently take over my thoughts. It's funny how often just one small anxiety can make the whole enchilada taste off.

We tell ourselves limiting stories about inadequacy, failure, past history and lack of potential and these can become our narrative about who we are. They prevent us from seeing ourselves as we really are: capable, talented and whole.

I look around at people and their relationship to work and wonder what motivates them. There's an ethical range to generating an income everywhere, from "Hey yeah, I'll put melamine into baby food" to "I'm going to replace gasoline with an amazing, sustainable alternative." Am I naïve in hoping to find ful-

filling and lucrative employment that not only doesn't make the world worse off, but also actually makes it better?

What makes people choose their course? What inspires them? What inspires me? I'm getting into it, with trepidation and excitement. A new future unfolds.

Filmspiration:

Religulous
W.

Quotespiration:

Every time a man expects, as he says, his money to work for him, he is expecting other people to work for him.

— Dorothy L. Sayers

Money is like fire, an element as little troubled by moralizing as earth, air and water. Men can employ it as a tool, or they can dance around it as if it were

the incarnation of a god. Money votes socialist or monarchist, finds a profit in pornography or translations from the Bible, commissions Rembrandt and underwrites the technology of Auschwitz. It acquires its meaning from the uses to which it is put.

— Lewis H. Lapham

Money does not corrupt people. What corrupts people is lack of affection... Money is simply the bandage, which wounded people put over their wounds.

— Margaret Halsey

Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti and ponders many things. Currently, he is doing what he can for himself and the planet. contactishi@yahoo.ca

Waiting to hear echoes back...



Big media bad for journalism

INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

IN THE QUARTER ending November 30, 2008, media giant Canwest reported a \$33M loss with an overwhelming \$3.7 billion debt. (See links at end of article.) In the past 12 months, Canwest has also cut more than 1,000 jobs and is scaling back local operations. It is also considering shutting down some stations entirely.

Collectively, Canwest, Torstar, Quebecor and CTVglobemedia have cut about 1,300 more jobs in the past three months, on top of deep cuts made last year. With ad revenues expected to slump further, there is no end in sight.

The effects of these dramatic cuts in journalism will negatively affect public debate and discourse in Canada because, as former *Toronto Star* publisher John Honderich notes, "The quality of public debate, if not the very quality of life in any community, is a direct function of the quality of media that serve it."

Journalism's diagnosis

In his piece entitled *All the News That's Fit to Fund*, John Honderich does a good job of explaining why journalism is important in a democratic society. And while Honderich also offers some good ideas on how to revive journalism, he fails to discuss why journalism is in

its current state of crisis.

So what is the cause of the current state of journalism in Canada? In a statement made by Leonard Asper, Canada's largest media baron, on the likely demolition of TV stations located in Montreal, Hamilton, Red Deer, Kelowna and Victoria, he declared, "As they are currently configured, these stations are not core to our television operations going forward... we believe that our efforts are best focused on the areas of greatest return." Asper's comments reveal that news outlets, and the journalists that work for them, are increasingly treated as a part of a business rather than a unique social institution that is essential to a functioning democracy.

"Big Media" executives, however, try to claim that journalism's woes are caused by the slumping economy or the displacement of audiences to new online media. While certainly these are factors, the primary cause is highly concentrated media ownership combined with the deepening bottom-line mentality of big media corporations. Media ownership is more highly concentrated in Canada than almost anywhere else in the industrialized world. Something to think about is how just hours before CTVglobemedia announced its intention

to take over CHUM they laid off 281 people and cancelled news broadcasts across the country.

Big Media's race to the bottom

In 2007, the Canadian Energy, Communications and Paperworkers (CEP) union published a study entitled *Voices From the Newsroom* (see links), in which they found that only 9.5 percent of journalists indicated that they believe the corporate owners of their news outlet valued good journalism over profit. The CEP report clearly illustrates the sentiment felt by most journalists: that the bottom line mentality of big media owners is having an increasingly negative impact on their ability to do their jobs.

A newspaper is not likely to provide engaging journalism if it is geared towards efficiently delivering eyeballs to advertisers while investing the least amount of money possible in journalism. Combine this bottom-line mentality with an uncompetitive, concentrated traditional media market, along with the erosion of ad revenue, and you'll find a race to the bottom for journalism in Canada.

Experiments needed

Despite the layoffs, weak morale and big media debt, journalism in Canada is

far from its grave. On the contrary, with the decline of big-business-financed journalism, this is the perfect time for us to re-imagine what journalism in the 21st century should look like.

In my next column, I will lay out various schemes for a rejuvenated 21st century public services journalism in Canada. There's no shortage of experiments underway and you may, in fact, be reading this column via one of those experiments right now.

Links

- **\$33M loss:**
www.canwest.com/media/viewNews.asp?NewsroomID=916
- **\$3.7 billion debt:**
www.newslab.ca/?p=138
- **Voices From the Newsroom:**
www.cep.ca/cep_on_line/MediaStudyEN.pdf

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media. He contributed to Censored 2008 and Battleground: The Media, and has written for The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times and Adbusters. Reach him at: steve@democraticmedia.ca www.FacebookSteve.com

Datebook

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www.earthhour.org



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MAR 10

Transmission Meditation is a group meditation for the purpose of 'stepping down' or transforming spiritual energies, making them accessible and useful to the general public. It is a simple & powerful means of personal growth. Everyone welcome. No prior experience necessary. Video presentation 7pm, March 10, YWCA Hotel, 733 Beatty, CANFOR Room. Sponsored by Tara Canada - donations gratefully accepted.

MAR 11

Meditation for Planetary Peace on the Full Moon, March 11 at 7:30pm. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm

MAR 12 - 13

Workshops that Work Learn to design and facilitate effective, participatory training sessions with diverse participants. Learn skills to engage and motivate participants and guide groups through difficult topics. Langara College 100 W. 49th Ave, 10 am - 5 pm. \$179. Register 604-323-5322

MAR 13, 14, 15

The Healing Power Of Angels Best Western Sands Hotel, 1755 Davie Street. Be transported to angelic realms. Experience the archangels' healing powers. 7pm. Friday night, \$20, 604-591-6095, info@HealingPowerofAngels.org, www.HealingPowerofAngels.org

MAR 14-16

Silent Retreat: An opportunity to recharge, re-balance and discover the peace within at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. Personal retreats can also be arranged at anytime. 1-604-740-0898, www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com

MAR 14

Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle: Sat. 7-10pm. Insight/healing from your Nature Spirit Animal Totem guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254, W. 7th. Donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636. www.shamanichealing.info

MAR 20 or 21

ABC's of Macrobiotics Introductory healthy cooking class with serious foodie and renowned International chef Nadine Barner. March 20, 6:15 - 10pm or March 21, 10am - 2:15pm 604-876-7653 cost \$119 www.nwcv.com/blog/?p=373 www.nadinebarner.com

MAR 21

Wolfsong Chanting Circle - Spring Equinox Celebration: Sat, 7-10pm. Participate singing shared sacred healing chants from the Spirit of the Land. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254 W. 7th. By donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636. www.shamanichealing.info

MAR 21-22

Raw Food Instructor Certification! Extensive gourmet meals, sprouting, dehydrating, coaching. Opportunity to teach and have own website. 11am-7pm \$650 Prerequisite: Raw Food Chef Certification (Mar 8). Call: 778.839.8424, www.rawteacher.com/missjanice

MAR 24

Building a Stronger Relationship With your Teen Free Talk 7pm. Discover ways to develop a more rewarding relationship. Location: 2nd floor 1892 West Broadway. E-mail for registration: freetalk@kdkcounseling.com, www.kdkcounseling.com/free_talk.htm

MAR 24

Raw Desserts Class: Cake, frosting, torte, truffles, pies, ice cream & milkshakes that will have you nourished and appreciating this sweet life, 7-9pm. Investment \$50. Ph: 778.839.8424, www.rawteacher.com/missjanice

MAR 27 - 29

Remote Viewing workshop with author and Monroe Institute instructor, Paul Elder, offering a composite of the skills and techniques developed while training with the original Star Gate remote viewers. \$295, www.paul-elder.com

MAR 27

Introduction to Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30 pm \$10, Course \$325. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 29, APR 5, 19 & 26

Successful Weight Loss! What you need to do to be successful & how to avoid failure! 2-4pm, \$199 (includes CD). Limited seating, 604-990-1584, www.ehrlichandassociates.com

MAR 29

Cancer Prevention and Healing: 10am-5pm. Learn what more you can do. 5 Speakers: Nutrition, Cancer Cell Science, Emotional/Physical Connection, Home and Environmental Factors, Integrative Oncology. Centennial Theatre, 2300 Lonsdale Avenue, North Vancouver. Advance Tickets: \$35 (\$15 off for HANS members), www.hans.org, 604-435-0512.

APR 1 - 29

Learn Energy Medicine & Psychology tools to heal your mind - body - spirit! Workshop: 7-9pm, \$199 (Limited Seating), 604-990-1584, www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com

APR 1, 8, 15 & 22,

Pressure Proof Your Life! Become resilient to stress 7-9pm, \$199 (Includes CD). Limited Seating, 604.990.1584, www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com

APR 4

Firewalking: An ancient technique for personal transformation. 6:30-10:30pm, Sunshine Coast, BC. \$150, neva@thespiralriver.com, www.thespiralriver.com

APR 5 - JUN 28

Are You Or A Loved One Dealing With Diabetes, Dialysis, Or Organ Transplant? This Workshop Will Improve The Quality Of Your Life! 12 Sundays, 12:00-1:15pm. Discounted Rate: \$325 (Includes Cd). Limited Seating, 604-990-1584, www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com

APR 8

How do we work for change in tough political and economic times? Paul Loeb, author of the bestsellers Soul of a Citizen and The Impossible Will Take a Little While explores what keeps us going despite all the obstacles. At the Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 580 W. Hastings Street, 6:30pm. More info: jashwort@sfu.ca, 604.528.5590 or 1.877.528.5591

APR 10-13

Easter Celebration Retreat: Connect to the stillness and peace of this beautiful time of year during our silent retreat at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. 1-604-740-0898, www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com

MAY 8 & 9

Join Barbara Hand Clow, author of The Mayan Code, in a "Journey Through Nine Dimensions." Centre for Peace; \$175 at Banyen, or contact Deborah, freespiritmarketing@shaw.ca.

SUNDAYS

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

Free, anonymous, telephone support line:

Guided meditations for people suffering from chronic pain. Non-religious. Counselors have community crisis line training. 7-11pm, 604-936-5683.

A Course in Miracles ongoing study groups meet every Sunday morning 10:30am to 12:30pm (South Burnaby) and Tuesday evening 7:30 to 9:30pm (North Vancouver), NO CHARGE - donations only. Call Susan @ 604 987-6985 for details and directions.

Centre for Spiritual Living. Join us each Sunday in March for our 5 week series on Creating a Consciousness of Extraordinary Abundance. Hear the

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events

Meditation for Planetary Peace
 March 11th, 7:30 PM - St. George's Place
 2950 Laurel St. (at 14th), Vancouver

Pranic Healing Clinics in Vancouver
 St. George's, 2950 Laurel St. (at 14th)
 Tuesdays*: 11 AM - 2:30 PM & 6 - 9 PM

The Meditation for Planetary Peace is held at the beginning of each clinic. Last healing begins half-hour before closing. *Closed last Tuesday of the month.

Keep In Touch
www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm



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classes

Soul Realization
 March 7th - 8th
 Cost: \$350 Text: \$43

Crystal Healing
 March 21st - 22nd
 Cost: \$350 Text: \$43

Advanced Colour Healing
 April 4th - 5th
 Cost: \$450 Text: \$43

Past Life Healings By Appointment
 Please contact Janet Mierau
 at 604.921.6981 or jmierau@telus.net



Classifieds

heartfelt music of Leora Cashe, and others. Meditation 10:15am; service at 11:00am. 1495 W8 Ave. Vancouver. Info 604-321-1225 or www.cslvancouver.com

MONDAYS

More Contemporary Mystics in our New Cosmological World, An exploration of the lives and work of Robert Müller, Jean Vanier, Wendal Berry & Elizabeth Johnson Bill Wilson, SJ PhD, Mondays, April 6 – 27, 10am-12pm, 1831 Fern St., Victoria, 250-380.9786, \$85 series or \$25 drop-in, earthliteracies@gmail.com, www.livinglanguageinstitute.org. Programs in Earth Literacies.

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic 6 – 10pm, one hour sessions \$18. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

WEDNESDAYS

Hawaiian Medicine Circle: 7pm Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. \$10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Avenue, Burnaby. 604-431-7474. Call Kamu Kaimana.

Season for Non Violence: Powerful 10-week meditation beginning January 28; drop-in, \$10/week, workbook included, hosted by the Centre for Spiritual Living, Masonic Centre, 1495 W8th Ave. Vancouver, 604-321-1225.

THURSDAYS

Free! Powerful Effective Meditation sessions, as taught at the best Yoga studios in New York and LA! 7-9pm, Life Bliss Tree, #5-111 West Broadway, Vancouver 604-628-4479, www.LifeBlissCanada.org

FRIDAYS

Just Dance!
Three Fridays a month. Alcohol & smoke-free. 9pm, 2114 W. 4th Ave. @ Arbutus. \$10/5. www.justdance.ca.

"Destiny Dialogues" Free Talks First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. 7-9pm. 604-317-1613.

ONGOING

Free Meditation Workshop: Experience Kundalini awakening through Sahaja Yoga, as taught by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi & enjoy your Powers at our Weekly classes, always free and open to all. 604-597-8440, www.sahajayoga.org.

Events at VanDusen Botanical Garden:
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RETREATS

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SKIN DISEASE TREATMENT

DR. ANDY ZHOU, PHD, expert diagnosis and treatment, 604-736-6060, drandyzhou@gmail.com, www.TCMdermatologist.com (See ad in Resource Directory, Health & Healing.)

SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE SERVICE

THE SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE SERVICE provides free support, information and therapist referrals for people experiencing psychospiritual challenges, spiritual awakening and non-ordinary or transformative states of consciousness. www.spiritualemergence.net, 604-533-3545.

STORIES WANTED

SECOND WIND STORIES is inviting submissions for a proposed anthology about true-life love & success stories by 40-somethings. Visit www.secondwindstories.com

TAROT

VANCOUVER TAROT TRAINING INSTITUTE: Spiritual theory, practical training/supervised practice. Learn to empower clients. P/T or F/T career (certificate provided). Pain & Stress Management Sessions. Classes/individuals/correspondence/intuitive readings by phone or in person. 604-739-0042.

WORKSHOPS

5000-YEAR-OLD SECRETS REVEALED! Enlightened Master Paramahansa Nithyananda will be in Vancouver March 10-16 for free talks and powerful workshops. "Igniting" - "LA Yoga Magazine." 604-628-4479 or www.Yogam4You.org

THE WORK THAT CONNECTS

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On Track Zodiac



MARCH 2009 Adrien Dilon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Having to play mental chess with people can be somewhat frustrating when you are trying to get your point across. You wish you didn't always have to walk on eggshells with others. At this time, saying less will give you more understanding and help keep your impatience at bay.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

Your self-control and discipline will be tested. The key is to not go overboard in trying to maintain perfection and becoming inflexible. You may want to do things in a large-scale way, but subtlety is the potion for this process.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

You are usually very self-aware and to further your education you may find yourself researching your health with more intensity. You know that to be well informed is the best preventative measure to take. As you apply and integrate what you continue to learn, healing takes place.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Take stock of your emotions, as you may have no other choice than to quietly muse over the past. As you adjust both sides of your cerebral cortex, you perhaps need to take a long, deep breath into that great night. Use your mind to clear your emotions. In other words, take a "heart holiday."



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

Presently, you could find yourself in conflict with others and sensing the bittersweet taste of defeat. If you use opposition at this time as a vehicle for debate, it could lead to hidden aggression on your part. However, this is only if you haven't the patience and ease of your convictions to "know when to fold..."



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

Take this time to make yourself secure and powerful beyond measure. If you put down roots for success now, a time for achievement and recognition will surely follow. If you have the ability to excel, you may hold favour in the public eye..



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

Look for huge surprises as your self-worth returns to remind you that you may have left yourself hanging out to dry. A revaluation of what you value takes precedence. "All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart." – Kahlil Gibran



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

You may feel emotionally stifled and you might want to relax and allow your creative energies all the time they need to get back to centre. The proverbial pendulum will swing, bringing high excitement levels that build into next month. Explosions of inspiration will knock down those walls.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

You may feel that lady luck is gently sitting on your shoulder and this is partly true. At this time, however, don't overextend yourself too much as often happens when you feel everything you do will turn to gold. Learn a wee bit more temperance as you spend and splurge in many splendid ways.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Even as the many changes that have swept through your life continue, balance is finding its way into your day-to-day activities. Your wish to proclaim yourself and to make headway in your accomplishments is a reality.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

Things could be explosive in the areas where you put your ego desire. The way you communicate your affections will speak volumes, as your passions peak and confidence runs high. You will certainly have a calming effect on yourself and others if you adopt a new way of relating your strengths.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

A new cycle begins as it relates to your relationships. As a new egg cracks open with possibility, you put your best foot forward with a new start. After a long hard look at your list of priorities, you sent out that message in a bottle and now it has been received. The mystery is by whom?

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 34 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dilon@gmail.com.

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